

BOROUGH OF GLASTONBURY.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 1910.

To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Glastonbury.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg leave to submit to you my report for the year ending 31st December, 1910.

Area.—5,000 Acres.

Area.

Population.—4,016 (Census 1901).

Population.

Geology.—The higher and more populated parts of the Borough: Lower Lias, Clay, and Limestone; the lower and outlying districts: Alluvium Peat.

Geology.

Occupation.—Manufacturing, Rugs and Gloves; Agriculture. A very large number of workers find employment at the Boot and Shoe Factories at Street.

Occupation.

Birth Rate.— Per 1,000 living: 23.04.

Birth Rate.

Death Rate.— „ „ „ 13.69.

Death Rate.

Zymotic Rate.— „ „ „ 1.74.

Zymotic Rate.

Infant Mortality per 1,000 births: 74.46.

Infant Mortality.

Water Supply.—The supply has been in every way abundant for the needs of the population. The quality has been good; at the same time I recommend, as I have done on former occasions, that it should be chemically and bacteriologically examined. I have received one complaint; but on examination of a sample could not detect anything amiss. New mains have been laid to some of the outlying farms at Edgarley. A group of houses in Summerhouse Orchard are still without the town water. I have reported this matter on several occasions, but no notice has been taken.

Water Supply.

Sewerage and Drainage.—A large and comprehensive scheme for renovating and extending the present sewage system is in contemplation. The Local Government Board held an enquiry during the year, at which application was made for borrowing powers, and has resulted, as I understand, in the practical adoption of the scheme recommended by Mr. Cotterell, of Bristol.

Sewerage and Drainage.

Several cases of doing away with old drains and the substitution of properly laid glazed and jointed pipes have been carried out, under the supervision of the Surveyor. A group of houses in the Wells Road who discharged their drains into a cesspit were ordered to connect up to the main sewer; this work is completed.

Scavenging.—The scavenging is carried out by the Corporation men in a satisfactory way; the refuse so collected is, for the greater part, destroyed by fire at the yard at Cradle Bridge.

Scavenging.

There has been a considerable extension of the cement pavement laid, which has proved a most satisfactory improvement on the stone pavement.

The tar-spraying of the streets has done much to keep down the dust nuisance caused by the enormous increase in motor traffic, and adds much to the sanitary condition of the town.

Prevalence of Disease.—The Birth-rate has risen this year to rather above the average for the last ten years, being 23.40, the average 23.27, which is the same as the Urban District average. The Death-rate for the year, 13.69, compares favourably with that of last year, 14.19; it is slightly lower than that of the Urban Districts for the same period, which is 13.7, and lower than the rate for England and Wales, which is 14.5. The decrease would have been considerably lower had not the town been visited by an epidemic of measles and whooping-cough during the last quarter, which accounted for seven deaths.

The first quarter of the year was unhealthy; influenza was epidemic, and many cases of diseases of the respiratory organs occurred, several deaths being due to these diseases. Three cases of scarlet-fever were notified; they were all at once removed to the Isolation Hospital, and there was no spread of the disease.

During the second quarter diseases of the respiratory organs were frequent and accounted for five deaths. The only fatal case of phthisis occurred during this period. The third quarter was healthy, and calls for no special comment.

The fourth quarter was marked by an outbreak of measles, complicated in many cases with whooping-cough. The disease was of a serious type, seven cases ending fatally, these being the only deaths from zymotic disease, and give a zymotic death-rate of 1.74. The outbreak began in St. John's Infant Department, and spread rapidly among the children. After consultation with the County Medical Officer of Health the department was closed for a period of three weeks, which was further prolonged to five weeks. In December the children at St. Benedict's Schools became infected; an order was given to close the schools for five weeks.

One Poor-law case of phthisis has been notified; a card of advice and precaution on the disease was supplied to the patient. In the case that terminated fatally, and in cases when tuberculous patients have changed residences the rooms occupied have been sprayed and disinfected by the Sanitary Inspector.

I understand that what is known as the Tuberculin treatment has been tried in several cases of tuberculosis in the town. It will be interesting to know the result of this trial, say at the end of the present year, to see how many of the cases have derived benefit from the treatment.

The death-rate among children under one year is low and compares favourably with the last ten years' average of 95.28.

Isolation Hospital.—This institution has proved most useful in cutting short three outbreaks of scarlet-fever which appeared at different periods of the first quarter and at different parts of the town. In each case the patient was immediately removed to the Hospital, and there was no further spread. The use of half the Hospital was granted to the Territorial forces whilst manœuvring round the district, but no cases of infectious disease were admitted.

A Threshes disinfecter is in use at the Hospital. Disinfection of infected premises is carried on by the Sanitary Inspector by means of spraying and fumigation with formalin, Izal, and sulphur-dioxide.

Housing of the Working-Classes.—The following districts were inspected—Benedict Street (including Park Cottages, Grope Lane, and Benedict's Buildings), Magdalene Street, the Armoury, Silver Street, Somers Square, Victoria Buildings, Chilkwell Street, part of the Wells Road, and Bove Town (including Summerhouse Orchard and Coombe Terrace).

With the Sanitary Inspector, I examined nearly the whole of the 186 houses visited. Eight were empty, one unfit for human habitation. We made careful inspection of the sanitary offices, back-yards, drains, and water supply, noting any structural defects and the number of occupants. We found defects in 25 cases, and one case of overcrowding. Verbal or written notices were served on either the owners or occupiers to abate; in the majority of cases these were complied with.

The want of houses, with more bedroom accommodation, for the working-classes is a pressing need, and I presume will be insisted on under the Town Planning Act, which will condemn many of the old houses now in existence. During this year the house-to-house inspection will be carried out under this Act. An entirely new form of register of houses will be adopted, which will involve a large amount of work on the Sanitary Inspector and myself.

Housing of the Working-Classes
continued.

Dairies, Milkshops and Cowsheds.—Sixteen on the register. Twenty-nine inspections. On the whole, kept fairly clean. Some are crowded up with various kinds of lumber, and some are not whitewashed as often as is necessary. Manure is allowed to accumulate outside the cowsheds, and is not removed systematically as it should be.

Dairies, Milkshops,
and Cowsheds.

Four cases of bovine anthrax have been reported, all of which have been satisfactorily dealt with by the police.

Slaughter-Houses.—Six on register. Two New Zealand meat-shops. Seventeen inspections. The slaughter-houses still constitute a public nuisance and a disgrace to the town. They should be abolished and a public abattoir substituted. Any complaints made and verbal orders given to occupiers to make good defects, whitewash, and cleanse have been readily complied with.

Slaughter-Houses.

Bakehouses.—Seven on register. One given up within the last two months. At some of my inspections I noticed a great want of cleanliness; floors were not kept clean and brushed up, whitewashing badly needed, and an obvious want of general tidiness.

Bakehouses.

Factories and Workshops.—Twenty-six on register. Twenty-five inspections. These I found clean and well looked after and carrying out the regulations of the Act. I have no defects to report. By sending repeated notices to employers, lists of outworkers have come more readily to hand than in former years.

Factories and Workshops.

Elementary Schools.—Improvements have been made in both schools; at St. John's better ventilation has been secured by providing Tobin's tubes and air-exits in the gables. The sanitary offices and drains have been renovated and extra accommodation provided in the boys' lobby. At St. Benedict's, the schools have been much enlarged and provision made for an ample supply of light and air. An entirely new system of w.-c.s and urinals have been provided.

Elementary Schools.

The Schools have been visited on several occasions by the County School Medical Officer and Oculist, and cases requiring medical or surgical treatment or provision of spectacles were reported to the District Education Sub-Committee, who have given considerable attention to the matter, with much benefit to the children.

I visited the Schools frequently during the epidemic of measles, and advised the teachers as to exclusion of cases.

The scheme of notification recommended by Dr. Savage has been found very useful; it is a pity it cannot be carried on during the closure of the schools for infectious disease.

Common Lodging-House.—Inspected and found clean and well looked after. The sanitary accommodation was satisfactory.

Common Lodging Houses

Bye-Laws.—A code in force, which in several ways should be remodelled, so as to include the control of many nuisances which exist or come in the town.

Bye-Laws.

I cannot conclude without thanking the Sanitary Inspector for his valuable help, so freely given.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. ALEX. BLAKISTON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Glastonbury, 25th January, 1911.

Inspector's Report of the Sanitary Work completed in the year 1910.

To A. A. BLAKISTON, Esq., Medical Officer of Health.

SIR,—Herewith I beg to hand you my report for the year ended 31st December, 1910. Inspections periodically made in company with yourself to Dwellings of the Working-Classes, Milkshops, Dairies and Cowstalls, Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, and Workshops and Factories are not included in these returns. Two premises have been disinfected after scarlet-fever, and four after measles, tuberculosis, etc. The St. Benignus' Schools have once been sprayed with Formalin, and St. John's Schools once with Formalin and once with Izal, in accordance with your instructions. The drainage and sanitary arrangements of a great number of dwellings have been re-constructed and water-tested during the year, and a group of some seven dwellings not previously connected to the main sewers are now connected therewith.

I am, sir, yours truly,

GEORGE ALVES.

Sanitary Inspector.